DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 103 818 CS 001 678

AUTHOR Livingston, Cathy L.
TITLE The Mad Hatter or Responsibilities of a Reading Instructor in a Community College.
PUB DATE Sep 74
NOTE 10p.; Paper presented at the Annual Fall Meeting of the College Instructors of Reading Professionals (2nd, Illinois State University, September 1974)

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.76 HC-$1.58 PLUS POSTAGE
DESCRIPTORS Community Colleges; Curriculum Planning; Guidelines; Junior Colleges; Preservice Education; Program Descriptions; *Reading Instruction; *Reading Programs; *Teacher Responsibility; *Teacher Role

ABSTRACT

This paper describes and examines the role and responsibilities of the reading instructor in a community college, arguing that in order to be effective, the community college reading teacher must have expertise in subject areas other than reading. Guidelines are suggested for preservice programs for junior college instructors; and responsibilities instructors must be competent to handle (i.e., diagnosis, selection of materials, teaching techniques, and skill in evaluation) are described. Nonreading responsibilities such as advising students, planning courses, and providing inservice training for new staff are also described. (RB)

U S DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH,
EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF
EDUCATION
THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

ED103818

THE MAD HATTER

OR

RESPONSIBILITIES OF A READING INSTRUCTOR IN A COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Paper presented at the Second Annual Fall Meeting
of the College Instructors of Reading Professionals

Illinois State University
September 20, 1974

Cathy L. Livingston
Coordinator of Reading Program
Parkland College

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS COPYRIGHTED MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
Cathy L. Livingston

TO ERIC AND ORGANIZATIONS OPERATING UNDER AGREEMENTS WITH THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION. FURTHER REPRODUCTION OUTSIDE THE ERIC SYSTEM REQUIRES PERMISSION OF THE COPYRIGHT OWNER.

CS 001 678

Introduction

In preparing students to eventually work in community college reading programs, the author believes that in order to be effective, the prospective teacher will need to be familiar with more than the teaching of reading skills. It is not the intent or function of this paper to make martyrs of community college reading teachers. However, there do appear to be some characteristic patterns associated with community colleges which make it necessary for the reading instructor to have expertise in additional areas other than reading.

Duties and Responsibilities of Community College Reading Instructors as Described in the Literature

Kazmierski in an article entitled "Training Faculty for Junior College Reading Programs" has stated that "one of the least publicized and most important responsibilities of a 2-year college is remedial and developmental education, especially in reading and study skills programs." (Kazmierski, 1971). Kazmierski goes on to list the duties and responsibilities of present faculties:

1. Need to work with a very heterogeneous population; ex. Transfer, career, no-goals, etc.; Some students have superior ability while others are decidedly deficient.

2. Need to plan for the variances in course structures, individual instructional needs, etc.

3. Need to develop effective diagnosis and evaluation plans; tasks are more complex at this level than at other levels because of the greater differences and gaps in students' goals and needs; standardized tests are not adequate at this level, and individualized tests are time-consuming to administer; finally, it is difficult to interpret test results.

4. Need to continually find information about the effectiveness of the program; need to translate research findings for practical use.

5. Need to determine how to select new instructional materials that haven't been tested for a very large population, or which have been tested, but for a different population than the one in question.

6. Need to realize that frequently one is working in a climate of immense innovation that too often looks for panaceas rather than for ways to meet needs of students.

7. Need to participate in an academic governance procedure which is different from lower educational levels or a university senate.

8. Need to carry a heavy teaching load, which frequently involves a heavy amount of counseling.

9. Need to teach and counsel in a structure of continuing educational and philosophical change that moves with community fads.

Kazmierski has done a good job at presenting the basic tasks facing a reading instructor in a community college. He has also, for some of the tasks, included a few words which make it easier to understand why a task is made more difficult because of its occurrence in a community college.

Carter and McGinnis (1970) summarize the challenges which face the junior college reading therapists of today. They must be able to do more than dispense information, provide for practice, and test for mastery. Therapists at the college level must be capable of individualizing reading instruction in large group settings. They need to develop a high degree of flexibility in the selection of teaching methods and techniques. The therapist needs experience in testing designed to identify the reading needs of the student. To prepare therapists, the following recommendations are several of the ones made by Carter and McGinnis:

1. Identify and select students in the junior year having a desire and potential for careers as reading specialists, at the college-adult level.

2. Encourage these individuals to acquire at the undergraduate level a background in psychology, sociology, and education which is relevant to their interests and needs. At this time the therapist in training should also have an opportunity to become acquainted with the aims, materials, and procedures generally utilized in the teaching of reading.

3. Expand preparation at the graduate level so as to insure a broad experiential background in the clinical study of the disabled reader and provide a rigorous approach to the acts of diagnosis.

4. Acquaint students with the many approaches, materials, and methods which can be used in college-adult reading courses.

5. Familiarize students with the history of the college-adult reading movement so that they will not repeat inadequate forms of instruction employed by earlier workers in the field.

6. Provide students with a philosophy, background, and intern experiences in individual and group counseling.

Martha J. Maxwell (1966) includes similar suggestions for preparing students to be reading instructors in the community college.

Guidelines for Pre-Service Programs for Junior College Instructors

The American Association of Community Junior Colleges (AACJC) has been one of the strongest forces in promoting specialized training for junior college instructors. Edmund J. Gleazer, Jr., the executive secretary, summarized the Association's most recent guidelines for a pre-service program (1964):

1. the historical role of the two-year college and its future in American higher education

2. modern learning theory, including the uses and limits of educational evaluation, testing, and measurement

3. the theory and techniques of curriculum development

4. elements of student guidance and counseling

5. knowledge and practice in school administration, to make campus communications easier and to facilitate teacher participation in campus governance for later administrative jobs

6. the profile, culture, goals, and values of the diverse student population at today's junior colleges

7. an opportunity for substantial, relevant, supervised practice teaching or internship at a two-year college

8. construction and use of programed curriculums and other innovative instructional techniques

9. handling educational hardware and other modern media, including their integration with traditional teaching methods

10. how to define, implement, and measure specific goals for student learning so as to reach clear, measurable learning objectives within a definite period of time

11. the ability to locate and apply resources to help define and meet the socioeconomic needs of a college and neighborhood: actual work experience and involvement in a community project; application of experience to improve teaching and student communication

12. interdisciplinary coordination of instruction in teaching "core" subjects so as to reach students with widely different abilities, backgrounds, and goals

Responsibilities of a Community College Reading Instructor

If one combines the information from the literature sources included earlier, (See Kazmierski, 1971: Carter and McGinnis, 1970: and Gleazer, 1964), one has a fairly complete picture of the responsibilities which face a community college reading instructor. The final section of this paper will attempt to interpret the information from these literature sources and elaborate on the responsibilites from experience. The tasks which face a reading instructor can be divided into two categories: (1) those related directly to reading; and (2) those not usually related directly to reading. Many of the tasks discussed under the heading of non-reading related responsibilities are in fact related to the teaching of reading but are frequently overlooked when a student is studying to become a reading therapist in a

community college. The literature information has done a better job at describing the reading related responsibilities than describing the non-reading related responsibilities.

Reading Related Responsibilities

The author believes that to operate a sound reading program, the instructor needs to be competent in the following areas:

1. Diagnosis - includes familiarity with instruments available and their limitations;

2. Interpretation of diagnostic results - assumes knowledge of the process of reading and the meaning of various reading profile patterns;

3. Flexible teaching strategies - includes knowledge of various learning theories and teaching strategies which one is often called upon to use because of the heterogeneous characteristics of students involved;

4. Skill in evaluation - includes ability to write and measure objectives which are student-oriented;

5. Thorough knowledge of the field of reading - includes knowledge of method of teaching reading of K-14, and all of the subject and skill information taught at these levels;

6. Previewing and selecting instructional materials;

7. Preparing teacher-made materials; results from finding that commercial materials are inadequate at the adult level;

8. Familiarity with authorities in field - includes knowing major authors and their areas of expertise along with familiarity of professional organizations and publications in the field;

9. Skill in organizing and planning a total program - includes skills required for on-going revision of existing programs;

10. Some understanding of research as it relates to reading programs - includes basic skills needed to do research on effectiveness of programs.

Non-Reading Related Responsibilities

These responsibilities are often overlooked in the preparation of junior college reading instructors. In many ways, the author believes that one's success in a community college is measured also by one's mastery of these skills. The most well-prepared reading instructor may fail if he doesn't know how to operate within the system. The following list is one developed by the author and is probably at best only an initial listing of these non-reading related skills. The reading instructor needs to develop competencies in the following areas:

1. In-house knowledge: Includes such information as (a) how the various curricula are set up, and the approximate reading levels required for each; (b) information in practical matters such as helping students go through procedures to secure financial aid; (c) many students are part-time and hence have to rely on instructors instead of an assigned counselor for college information; (d) information in helping students with in-house procedures, etc.

2. Advising students: In many community colleges, students are assigned to a faculty member who assumes the role of their faculty advisor.
   (a) Need to be able to plan curriculum and schedule for student while he is attending your college;
   (b) Need to be able to secure information to coordinate transfer credits.

3. Governance structure: Need to be familiar with how the college operates internally in order to facilitate making changes and meeting goals established by the reading program.
   (a) Includes knowing how to prepare curriculum changes;
   (b) Includes knowing other faculty members involved with reading curriculum.

4. Administrative qualities: Because of the smallness of a reading staff, frequently the instructor is assigned administrative responsibilities which include:
   (a) Hiring of staff members;
   (b) Evaluation of staff members;
   (c) Planning course specs - predicting enrollments, etc.;
   (d) Submitting budgets;
   (e) Ordering textbooks and materials.

5. Providing in-service training: Includes setting the level of quality of performance. If program utilizes many part-time instructors, frequently the coordinator is responsible for providing training and upgrading of skills.

6. Involvement in community affairs: Includes working with community agencies working in improving reading skills, e.g., ABE centers, OIC centers, etc. Includes keeping in touch with reading needs of local community.

7. Role as consultant: Includes working with outside contacts who for various reasons contact reading instructor for service.

In summary, the author has tried to show that while authorities in the field of preparing community college reading instructors have done a fairly good job at describing reading related tasks, they have not included very much information about the non-reading related activities. While the reading skills are essential, the author also believes that for different reasons, the non-reading related skills are equally as important.

Bibliography

Carter, Homer L. J., and Dorothy J. McGinnis. "Some Factors to be Considered in Conducting a College Adult Reading Program." In George B. Schick and Merill M. May (Eds.), Junior College and Adult Reading Programs: Expanding Fields, Sixteenth Yearbook of the National Reading Conference. Milwaukee: The National Reading Conference, Inc., 1967.

Gleazer, Edmund J. "Preparation of Junior College Instructors." Junior College Journal, 1964, 35 (1), 3-4.

Kazmierski, Paul R. Training Faculty for Junior College Reading Programs. Los Angeles, Calif.: California University, 1971. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 050 711)

Maxwell, Martha J. "Training College Reading Specialists." Journal of Reading, 1966, 10 (3), 149-151.